

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 037899

FOR ATHERTON

FOL RPT BEIRUT 1457 ACTION SECSTATE INFO ATHENS AMMAN
DAMASCUS CAIRO JIDDA TEL AVIV USCINCEUR 17 FEB.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1457

DELIVER TO NEA/ARN/DRAPER AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: 0900 LEBANON REPORT

1. FRANGIE ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW "CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENT"
SATURDAY NIGHT WAS FOLLOWED BY JUBILANT SHOOTING IN THE AIR
MAINLY IN WESTERN BEIRUT AND RELIEF IN MANY QUARTERS
MARKED BY LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE STREETS SUNDAY.
BY YESTERDAY "YES, BUT..... REACTIONS HAD SET IN.
KHADDAM AND HIS SYRIAN OFFICERS MADE ROUND OF VISITS
TO TOP MOSLEM LEADERS INCLUDING JUMBLATT AND THESE WERE
FOLLOWED BY VISITS TO SALAM AND JUMBLATT BY
KARAME. IT IS RUMORED THAT KHADDAM WILL RETURN TO
DAMASCUS IKN NEXT 24 HOURS TO REPORT TO ASAD. WE
ASSUME KARAME HAS BEEN DISCUSSING FORMATION OF AN
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ENLARGED GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS POINTS IN THE AGREE-

MENT.

2. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT JUMBLATT DID NOT CHANGE HIS OPPOSITION TO THE AGREEMENT. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT MUFTI WILL ALSO PRESIDE OVER MEETING OF MOSLEM LEADERS TO REGISTER RESERVATIONS ON WHAT AGREEMENT HAS ACCOMPLISHED. WE VIEW THIS AS: (A) APPART OF THE BARGAINING PROCESS WHICH CONTINUES ON DETAILS AND (B) NEED FOR LEADERS IN LEBANON TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF SUBSERVIENCE TO SYRIAN-IMPOSED AGREEMENT. WHILE THIS RAISES SERIOUS QUESTION ABOUT HOW LONG THE AGREEMENT WILL LAST EVEN AFTER IT HAS BEEN APPLIED, WE DO NOT THINK THESE ELEMENTS OF OPPOSITION WILL DO ANYTHING TO TORPEDO THE AGREEMENT AS LONG AS SYRIANS ARE INVOLVED IN SELLING THE AGREEMENT HERE.

3. ON CHRISTIAN SIDE, PHALANGE HAS ALSO EXPRESSED LONG TERM RESERVATIONS BASED ON NEED FOR AGREEMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT WITH ABSOLUTE LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY. FOR TIME BEING, HOWEVER, PHALANGE CONTINUES TO WELCOME THE AGREEMENT. EMBASSY HAS HEARD THAT ARMY LEADERS BRIG. MOUSA KANAAN AND COL. JULES BOUSTANI HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH GEN SHEHABI ON STEPS PROPOSED FOR CARRYING OUT THE CAIRO AGREEMENT.

4. THERE WAS BRIEF FLURRY IN KANTARI AND WADI ABOU JAMIL HOT SPOTS IN BEIRUT YESTERDAY WHEN AN AGED KURD GUKARD WAS SHOT DEAD BY UNIDENTIFIED PERSON WHO MAY HAVE BEEN KATAEB MEMBER. KURDS STARTED KIDNAPPING PEOPLE AND THIS STARTED WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS AND COUNTER-KIDNAPPINGS, BUT ALL EXCEPT ONE HAVE BEEN RELEASED FOLLOWING ARMY INTERVENTION ON THE SCENE. KATAEB PARTY HAS OFFICIALLY DISSOCIATED ITSELF FROM THIS ACTION, BUT IT DEMONSTRATED AGAIN HOW RAPIDLY LITTLE INCIDENTS COULD ESCALATE. ASSISTANT ARMY REPORTS THAT ARMY DOES NOT CONSIDER BEKAA SAFE FOR MOVEMENT OF ITS OWN TROOPS. THIS INCLUDES ROAD TO DAMASCUS. HOWEVER, MOSLEM CIVILIANS ARE EXPERIENCING NO TROUBLE IN MOVING THROUGH THE AREA DESPITE FREE RUN BEING ALLOWED THERE OF FOLLOWERS OF LT. KHATIB, UNDER WATCHFUL

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EYE OF PLA FORCES. ARMY ALSO REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE ORDERED FOUR M-42 TANKS FOR PROTECTION OF HIS PALACE SATURDAY, SPECIFYING THAT THEIR CREWS SHOULD ALL BE MARONITES.

5. HAVE JUST LEARNED OF SERIOUS INCIDENT IN AUB CAMPUS. MORE LATER.

6. NEWS LAST WEEK THAT THERE ARE ESTIMATED TO BE

140,000 TELEPHONES OUT OF ORDER IN THE COUNTRY
IS FOLLOWED TODAY BY NEWS THAT IT WILL TAKE ABOUT
TWO MONTHS TO REPAIR 60,000 TELEPHONE LINES ESTIMATED
TO BE OUT OF ORDER, 40,000 OF THEM IN BEIRUT.
OBVIOUSLY, NOT A GOOD DAY, DESPITE
WELCOME NEWS OF THE AGREEMENT ON SATURDAY.
LAMBRAKI

UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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